

Agricultural Marketing Service
Office of the Deputy Administrator
for Marketing Program Operations
Fruit and Vegetable Division
Market News Branch
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Fresh Fruit and
Vegetable) GS-1980-05

SJ FV11

I. INTRODUCTION

The fruit and vegetable market news field office is responsible for collecting, analyzing, preparing, and releasing market news data for all fresh fruits and vegetables sold and distributed in the production area and/or terminal market as appropriate. Reports cover trading of commodities moving in interstate commerce and affect marketing decisions nationwide.

The incumbent performs training assignments in conducting inspection services as they relate to quality and condition factors described in market news reports.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Incumbent performs assignments of a limited nature, primarily for the purpose of obtaining on-the-job training in making inspections as they relate to qualifying terms in evaluating market price and demand statements used in market news reports.

Studies instructional material, the official standards, and related regulations which govern the grading, inspection, and certification of products.

Receives instructions at the work site on determining general product quality and on the practical application of the standards and regulations.

Performs office or market agency fact gathering in specific areas of the marketing of perishable agricultural commodities.

Performs various administrative duties required in efficient office management.

Receives on-the-job training from Market Reporters dealing with a heavy volume of several different commodities, varieties, containers, and sizes representing a wide range in quality or grades.

As necessary, records fruit and vegetable prices for preparation of annual summaries or special reports requested by the industry or the agency.

III. EVALUATION FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position 550 points

Knowledge of Market News Service for fruits and vegetables.

Knowledge of the common types of fresh fruits and vegetables and their characteristics.

Familiarity with the general types of harvesting, packing, and transportation methods pertinent to fresh fruits and vegetables, as they affect general quality.

The ability to learn the official grade standards and regulations, and to learn the specific grading and inspection procedures.

The ability to develop skill in applying grading and inspection techniques.

Ability to establish rapport and conduct oneself in a tactful and diplomatic manner with industry personnel to maintain good working relations.

2. Supervisory Controls 25 points

The supervisor or employee of higher grade provides the assignment, giving detailed and specific instructions on the methods to be used in performing each phase of the work.

The grader works in strict adherence to the instructions. Assistance is readily available while the work is being performed, and the employee consults the supervisor or employee of higher grade to clarify the original instructions, product conditions, or circumstances which are new or unusual to the employee.

The work is closely reviewed. It is checked while in progress and upon completion for compliance with instructions for adherence to prescribed methods and procedures, for technical proficiency, and for the accuracy of any determination.

3. Guidelines 25 points

Written guidelines include parts of the official grade standards, regulations, visual aids, instructional training material, technical manuals, the Market News Handbook, and other material. However, the trainee is provided with the specific guidelines appropriate to the phase of work to be done. These guidelines are further explained to the employee before the work is performed.

The trainee adheres closely to the guidelines and instructions. Situations not directly covered by the guides (or borderline cases) are referred to the supervisor or employee of higher grade for clarification (or for determination).

Complexity 75 points

The work involves following methods and procedures which are closely related. The technical factors necessary to consider are made relatively apparent and readily verified.

Variations in the work stem primarily from the particular type of fruit and vegetable being graded.

5. Scope and Effect 75 points

The work consists of performing specific procedures to measure product grading factors, or to obtain representative product samples which affect the final grade or condition determination.

The work affects the accuracy and reliability of the final determination and certification.

6. Personal Contacts 25 points

Contacts are primarily with industry members and USDA employees. However, during the course of performing duties, the employee also has contacts with employees of packing sheds, distribution warehouses, etc., such as machine operators, packers, lab technicians, and warehouse workers.

7. Purpose of Contacts 50 points

Contacts with industry employees are for the purpose of coordinating the grader's own sampling or grading work with industry activities. Industry employees generally are cooperative in these matters. Minor difficulties may be resolved by the trainee, but generally questions and problems are routinely referred to the trainee supervisor for resolution.

8. Physical Demands 50 points

Commodity grading work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of products often weighing at least 50 pounds; prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity in at least one hand to perform digital examinations of commodities; ability to detect abnormalities in the commodity through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth of perception, and color; and the

ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and the ability to determine product quality through smell and/or taste.

9. Work Environment 20 points

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, high noise level and similar risks typical of fruit and vegetable processing plants, distribution warehouses, and storage areas.